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Dear John,

During the consideration of the Shipments of Radioactive Substances (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 on 26 February, I promised to write to you in respect of your questions. These were related to the number of UK exports of radioactive substances to the EU, the scope of the regulations, and the oversight of shipments of unsealed sources.

To help answer your questions, I have set out some more detail on this matter for you. Firstly, information on the number of exports of radioactive sources from the UK to the EU is held by the various competent authorities across the EU Member States. The UK competent authorities only hold information on the radioactive sources entering the UK.

Secondly, with respect to the question on the scope of the regulations, I can confirm that they will apply only to sealed sources. Paragraph 2.2 of the instrument's Explanatory Memorandum refers to the scope of the previous Euratom Regulation, which covered both sealed and unsealed radioactive sources. Paragraph 7.4 of the Explanatory Memorandum deals with the new regulations and makes it clear that the new regulations do not extend to unsealed sources.

Lastly, on the question of whether the regulations impact the UK environment agencies' continued ability to track the import of unsealed sources into the UK, I would like to assure you that the regulations do not reduce the UK environment agencies' oversight of the import of both sealed or unsealed radioactive sources.

These regulations do not continue the requirement for exporters to submit a return detailing all shipments of sealed and unsealed sources made during the preceding quarter. The UK Government, Devolved Administrations and UK environment agencies do not consider that such a requirement is needed. This information is already obtained in the UK through a combination of legal requirements related to the implementation of the Basic Safety Standards Directive and environmental permit conditions.

In England, Wales and Scotland, sites' permit conditions set out that the operator shall maintain records of unsealed radioactive sources, which includes information on the type of source received; its activity level; and if it is moved. These records are checked by the relevant environment agency during their routine inspections and the information can be requested by the agency at any time.

In Northern Ireland, under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency places limits on the levels of unsealed sources held and requires the retention of records by receivers for inspection. I trust the information provided in this letter brings clarification to the matters you raised on 26 February and reiterates the Government's continuing commitment to high safety standards for the control of radioactive substances.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rt Hon Lord Henley